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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 68th MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Tuesday, 26 January 1993, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mgr. BAMBAREN GASTELUMENDI

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES UNDER ARTICLE 44 OF THE CONVENTION (agenda item 11) (continued)

Report of Egypt (continued) (CRC/C/3/Add.6)

1. The CHAIRMAN invited the delegation of Egypt to reply to the questions asked at the previous meeting.

2. Mrs. EL-GUINDY (Egypt), replying to a series of questions by Mr. Kolosov, said that life expectancy in Egypt in 1989 had been 61 years for women and 59 for men. The infant mortality figures in 1990 had been, for children under one year of age, 43.3 per 1,000 live births, and for children under five, 6.1 per 1,000. Regarding health expenditure, she acknowledged that there was a shortage of toilets and bathrooms in schools. During the recent budget period the Ministry of Health had assigned a paediatrician to look into that situation. Modern schools, of course, had improved facilities. As for rural areas, most had sewage and toilet facilities, with the exception of some remote regions which had to use makeshift solutions such as latrines and open pits.

3. Concerning disabled children, the current five-year plan had set goals to raise expenditure on the treatment of disabled girls, an issue that was just beginning to receive attention. Two years earlier the authorities had begun a census of disabled children. It was difficult to collect statistics since families in Egypt were generally reluctant to admit that they had disabled children. There were centres for the training and rehabilitation of disabled children and for the training of personnel working with such children. The aim was to integrate disabled children into society whenever their disability allowed.

4. In reply to a question on education, she said that the authorities had in the past focused on enrolling the greatest possible number of children in school. Once that quantitative aspect had been achieved, the goal had shifted to the curriculum. A conference was to be held in February to reform the primary education system by improving teaching methods and modernizing teaching facilities and programmes.

5. Replying to a question by Miss Mason, she said she was not aware of any cases of leprosy among children in Egypt. The reference in paragraph 228 of the report might have been to vaccines against leprosy, or to scabies, which affected a very small number of children.

6. Mr. NAGUIB (Egypt) replying to a question on the importance attached to women's virginity in Muslim societies, said that Egyptian moral values were not based only on the Muslim religion, which had been in existence for a small period of Egyptian civilization. The importance of virginity for women went back to ancient Egypt, when virgin girls had been sacrificed to the Nile in years when it had not overflowed its banks. That value had subsequently been adopted by the Muslim society, but its importance was more social than religious.

7. Replying to another question by Miss Mason, he said that children born out of wedlock might be recognized by their father, in which case they took his name. If the father refused, the mother could institute paternity proceedings, and if the court ruling was positive the father was compelled to recognize the child. In the absence of such a ruling, a mother could give a child her own name.

8. The CHAIRMAN drew attention to the section of the list of issues entitled "Special protection measures", which read:

"Special protection measures

Children in situations of emergency

45. Please provide information on the situation of refugee children.

46. In the event of a natural disaster or emergency, what humanitarian assistance measures, other than those referred to in the report, are envisaged to safeguard the physical and mental health of children and reintegrate them into society?

Children in conflict with the law

47. Please provide further information on the situation of children in prison and the system of supervision. Are there specific measures applying to the police and prison staff for the better protection of children who have committed offences?

Children in situations of exploitation

48. Please describe concrete measures envisaged or taken for the protection of child workers, in particular for those employed in private family activities.

49. Please indicate whether programmes for vocational training or special education are implemented for street-children.

50. Does Egypt envisage ratifying the ILO Convention No. 138 and other ILO Conventions on minimum age, as well as other standards related to the protection of children and young persons at work?

51. Has the Government envisaged consulting the ILO on the revision of its legislation on minimum age and on the implementation of this legislation?

52. What specific measures are taken to ensure observance of the minimum working age, reduce child labour and protect working children?

Children belonging to a minority or an indigenous group

53. Please indicate what legislative measures have been taken or envisaged to ensure that children belonging to religious and other minorities are able to enjoy their own culture."

9. Mrs. EL-GUINDY (Egypt), replying to question 45, said that there were currently 3,100 refugee children in Egypt, mostly from Somalia, who were in most cases accompanied by their parents. UNHCR provided basic educational and health services and financial assistance to needy families. There were few unaccompanied children, but in such cases UNHCR sought foster families for the children and provided financial assistance. Some children had been assisted to return to their families. Concerning question 46, she said that the State was responsible for health and social services for children affected by natural disasters. The earthquake of October 1992 had caused widespread suffering among children and the destruction of some schools, which were being rebuilt by the State.

10. Regarding children in conflict with the law (question 47), she said Egypt did not have prisons for children but it did have reform institutions which aimed at helping children become normal citizens. Rehabilitation services were governed by Decree No. 37 of the Ministry of Social Affairs. The Ministry of the Interior, in cooperation with the Ministry of Social Affairs, organized seminars for people working with minors, aimed inter alia at avoiding ill-treatment of minors. Although some ill-treatment might occur, cases were isolated and in no way reflected official government policy.

11. In reply to the questions about children in situations of exploitation, she said the Labour Act of 1981 contained provisions for the protection of working children, which included supervision by labour inspection offices throughout the country. There were no statistics regarding children employed in private family activities, but the authorities believed that the number of such children was decreasing in view of the parents' wish to provide them with training and skills. Vocational training for street-children was provided by 48 training centres throughout the Republic. The number of street-children in Egypt was very small, since not even the poorest families abandoned their children. With regard to question 50, the Government was studying the possibility of ratifying the ILO Conventions in the light of the fact that education was now compulsory up to the age of 15. Replying to question 52, she said that chapter 2, article 1, of the 1981 Labour Act established conditions of employment for children. Because of economic needs, a large number of families did force their children to work. A bill laying down penalties for families who made their children work and employers who hired them was shortly to be discussed in Parliament.

12. Regarding question 53, she said that the term "minority" did not apply in Egypt, where freedom of religion was guaranteed at all levels of society. Thus there was no need for a law regulating that question.

13. Mrs. EUFEMIO requested information on the extent of psychological damage to Egyptian children following the earthquake of October 1992. Had any measures been taken to promote the psychological and social rehabilitation - especially in schools - of children affected by the earthquake?

14. The Juveniles Act indicated that some juvenile delinquency might be related to drug abuse. She would like to know the incidence of drug-related delinquency, and what measures had been taken to protect children from the use of drugs and prevent their involvement in drug-related activities.

15. Regarding sexual exploitation and sexual abuse, overcrowded conditions in poor families sometimes led to incest, which, because of the shame surrounding it, was not revealed. The lack of services for victims of incest was most probably due to the priority given to services in other areas, such as education and health.

16. Mrs. EL-GUINDY (Egypt) replied that since Egypt was not an area normally subject to earthquakes, it had been unprepared for the October 1992 disaster. After the earthquake all teachers had been given instructions on behaviour during earthquakes, and on their return to school the children had received explanations of what had happened and the appropriate way to react in the future. There had been no school for two weeks following the earthquake, which had given the children time to recover from the shock before resuming their classes.

17. Unfortunately, little information was available on children and drug abuse. Existing statistics related to children covered by the services of the Ministry of Social Affairs and children in police custody as a result of drug abuse.

18. Mr. NAGUIB (Egypt) said that although not all juvenile delinquency was drug-related, it was true that drug abuse was a very significant cause. There were two aspects to the problem, the use of children in drug-related activities and the encouragement of children to consume drugs. Drug-traffickers attempted to use minors in their activities because minors were not liable to the same penalties as adults. However, as a result of a reform of the laws, the death penalty was now applicable to anyone who exploited minors by using them in drug-related activities and to anyone who sold drugs in or near schools or children's reintegration centres. In that way the legislature had attempted to eliminate all access to children by drug dealers for either purpose. There was some incidence of petty delinquency and violence among drug-consuming minors. The authorities focused their activities on the reintegration of such children into society, and a special fund had been established for that purpose. Unfortunately, it was not possible to provide precise statistics at present.

19. In reply to a question by Mrs. Eufemio, he said that lack of adequate housing and crowded living conditions tended to create situations where sexual abuse might arise. Such problems were linked to the overall social and economic situation. They rarely came to light outside the family because they tended not to be spoken about publicly. The real solution to such problems lay in economic and social development, assuring decent housing and education for all children. Where adults exploited children or urged them to engage in activities in which they were exploited, the former were liable to punishment, including forced labour. Police and administrative personnel tended to deal severely with such cases.

20. Mrs. SANTOS PAIS, referring specifically to paragraphs 44 and 96 of the State party's report, said that it was not clear, in cases of children in conflict with the law, at what age a person was considered to have full criminal responsibility; paragraph 44 seemed to indicate that children between the ages of 15 and 18 might be liable to imprisonment, whereas paragraph 96 stated that the age for the enforcement of penalties was 18. In the light of

the principle that situations of deprivation of liberty should be considered as a last resort for children in conflict with the law and that, where a decision was taken to deprive a child of liberty, it should be for as short a period as possible, it would be interesting to obtain further information on the subject. She noted that paragraph 44 mentioned that there was an alternative to imprisonment in the form of placement in a social institution or on probation. When was such an alternative applied and was there periodic review of the decisions by the juvenile court and of any development or change in attitude on the part of the child?

21. On the question of the administration of juvenile justice, she referred to paragraph 142 of the report and asked whether the legally competent authority referred to was an impartial and independent body. In connection with the same paragraph, which confirmed that a person deprived of liberty should be treated with dignity, she asked whether there was any specific provision or measure to ensure that the dignity of the child, taking into account his or her status, was maintained and whether arrangements were made to ensure that children remained in contact with their families. On the question of training, she welcomed the information that seminars were being organized on the subject of torture and ill-treatment, and asked whether the personnel concerned were also given training specifically on the rights of the child and the Convention, on the United Nations standards for children deprived of liberty or on such standards as the "Beijing Rules". Lastly she asked in what way the principle of a fair trial was reflected in both legislation and practice with specific regard to children.

22. Mr. NAGUIB (Egypt) observed that the English text of paragraph 44 of his country's report failed to convey the actual situation with regard to deprivation of liberty. No penalty could be imposed on a minor under 18 years of age under Egyptian law. There were, however, measures intended to protect a minor who had committed an offence by removing him from the circumstances which had led him to commit the offence. Penalties as such applied only to persons over 18 and the duration of any term of punishment for an offence took into account the circumstances in which the person had committed the offence. During the period of placement in an institution the minor concerned would normally undergo psychological treatment where necessary and would benefit from medical and social protection, as well as continuing his education or vocational training. The minor would be allowed to leave the institution in cases where it was considered unlikely that he would not commit further offences, and the institution would provide follow-up to ensure that he was fully reintegrated into society.

23. At hearings concerning offences committed by minors under the age of 18, the persons concerned would appear before the juvenile court and the presence of a social worker, in most cases a women, would be assured. The living conditions and social environment of the minor would be taken into consideration at the hearing before the court took a decision either to return the minor to the custody of his parents or to place him in an institution. Lastly, the principle of a fair trial was fundamental to Egyptian law and applied equally to minors and adults. A person was presumed innocent until proved guilty.

24. Mrs. SANTOS PAIS requested further information concerning the distinction between imprisonment and placement in an institution. Were the conditions in the latter really different, particularly if a minor was required to remain there for some 10 years? Could the conditions in an institution be considered to resemble more closely the normal environment in which a child could expect to find himself or did they resemble a prison environment? The importance of reviewing a juvenile's situation must be emphasized; a child should be offered some prospect of a better future if he demonstrated a willingness or capacity to change and a greater maturity.

25. Further information would also be welcome on the measures which might be applied in the event of an offence committed by a child under the age of 18. The Convention placed emphasis on the need to consider the age of the child, to respect his dignity and to develop his capacity to play a constructive role in society, rather than making a response of a primarily punitive nature. Lastly, on the question of a fair trial, it would be useful to learn about the availability of legal assistance for young offenders and the presence of parents at hearings.

26. Mr. NAGUIB (Egypt) said that there was a great difference between institutions and prisons in his country. The aim of institutions was educational rather than punitive. In practice, of course, it was found that some institutions were more successfully run than others because of the qualities and high standard of training of the director and his staff. Indeed, the need for highly educated and trained personnel, who were aware of developments in similar institutions in other countries, was recognized and the National Council was making efforts to ensure that institutions performed well.

27. Mr. KOLOSOV, referring to paragraph 43 of the country report, noted that both measures and penalties could be imposed on a minor under the age of 15 years. In that connection, he asked what was the minimum age for the application of such measures and penalties and what was meant by the term "compulsory fulfilment of specified obligations". He also asked whether there were any indicators concerning juvenile offences. Referring to paragraph 44, it seemed to him that the question at issue was more than one of mistranslation. The text should be carefully checked against the original.

28. Mr. NAGUIB (Egypt) said that no child under the age of 7 could be questioned or brought before a judicial authority for any offence. In the case of minors between the ages of 15 and 18 years, the penalties imposed for offences they had committed were never the maximum penalties applicable to adults. Children were placed in institutions for the purposes of protection rather than punishment.

29. Mrs. SANTOS PAIS pointed out that if legislation provided for penalties, there was always the possibility that they could be imposed even where it had become customary for the court to decide to place a child in an institution. In instances where the option of placement was rejected, what penalties were in fact imposed and could they be in the form of imprisonment for 10 or more years? It seemed that legislation might be lagging behind practice in that respect and, if that was indeed the case, consideration might be given to reviewing the legislation. A great deal of attention still appeared to be

given to the nature of the offence and somewhat less to the reasons behind it. In that connection she again emphasized the principle that the child should be given an opportunity to play a useful role in society. Lastly, she stressed the importance of training to ensure that equal standards were applied both by directors of institutions and by judges.

30. Mr. NAGUIB (Egypt), explaining the background to the 1974 Juveniles Act, said that it had been the outcome of two contradictory trends: one towards setting the age of maturity at 18 years and the other at 15 years. The latter view stemmed from the fact that in certain more remote areas of the country young men still married as early as 17, despite current legislation, and were considered by their communities to be mature in certain respects. However, there was no ambiguity about the age of majority with respect to imprisonment. Persons under the age of 18 were not required to serve prison sentences but could be placed in specialized institutions.

31. Miss MASON observed that the definition of the notion of imprisonment depended partly on the reason for committal and the length of the sentence. She was not sure that her questions concerning the presumption of innocence and the involvement of parents during arrest procedures had been fully answered.

32. Mr. NAGUIB (Egypt) said that there was presumption of innocence in Egyptian law. A social worker must be summoned immediately on the arrest of a minor and was required to prepare a report, which would be based partly on an interview with the parents or guardians. Such reports must be available before the child was indicted, failing which the arrest procedure was declared void.

33. Mr. HAMMARBERG pointed out that there was a small proportion of young offenders who might be difficult to handle in institutions and whose situation must be constantly monitored. There was always a risk that, when minors were not subject to normal court hearings and sentences, their treatment might not be more lenient or humane and might indeed become quite arbitrary.

34. Mrs. SANTOS PAIS said that the parents must be notified immediately a child was arrested and should be present during indictment and court proceedings. The main purpose of such a requirement was to establish a bridge between the child and the justice system, so that the child could understand what was happening to him and the court could understand the personality of the child.

35. Mr. NAGUIB (Egypt) said that the parents were informed immediately of the arrest of a minor. The police also reported the matter immediately to a juvenile court judge, who determined what procedure should be followed. If the decision was to keep the minor in custody, an investigation by a social worker was instigated. Any eventual court hearing was attended by the social worker, the parents and the defence lawyer. The right of appeal existed against the decision of the court.

36. Mr. HAMMARBERG said that paragraph 309 of the report, concerning the employment of children under 12, required clarification. He would also like

the Egyptian delegation to comment on the fact (para. 308) that the labour force included over half a million children between 6 and 14.

37. The assurance given at a previous meeting that Egypt intended to ratify the ILO conventions on child labour was welcome. Nevertheless, it would still prove very difficult to enforce stricter laws, such as a law establishing 15 years as the minimum age of employment, when so many children were already in jobs. He would welcome information about how Egypt intended to implement such laws. Unless supporting measures were introduced, the new legislation would remain an empty gesture.

38. Mr. NAGUIB (Egypt) said that despite the establishment of a higher minimum age of employment many rural children still worked, and the new legislation would be less effective in rural than in urban areas, where monitoring was much easier. However, the number of parents requiring young children to work was falling as living standards rose in the countryside; raising the minimum age did have an effect on attitudes. It must, of course, be remembered that employment of under-age children was usually seasonal, at harvest time for example. With that in mind the Ministry of Education arranged for school holidays to fall at harvest time, so that the children's education was not greatly affected.

39. Miss MASON said that she had been impressed by all the plans and measures described in the report, except in the case of sexual exploitation of children. There seemed to be a reluctance to admit that such exploitation occurred in Egypt; and if it did occur, the impression was given that it was totally indiscriminate, affecting all population groups. It was more likely that such exploitation, at least in the family, occurred predominantly among the economically deprived population groups.

40. On the question of refugee children, the report stated that minorities, which presumably included refugees, were allowed to enjoy their own culture, etc. She would like to know whether refugee children were assimilated into Egyptian society or were regarded merely as transients and not covered by the law.

41. Mrs. EL-GUINDY (Egypt) said that most refugee children, numbering 3,100 according to UNHCR, were of Somali origin. They were provided with medical services and financial assistance, and efforts were made to integrate them in society. No great problems had been encountered in that process.

42. Mr. MOMBESHORA said that he would welcome more information about the application of the labour laws. In urban areas there were many hazardous types of employment, in the textile industry for example. Was Egypt satisfied with the enforcement of the law and that children were protected against health hazards?

43. Mrs. EL-GUINDY (Egypt) said that it was unusual for children to work in urban industries. The figure of 523,000 given in paragraph 308 was made up mainly of children in rural areas. Urban industries, such as textiles, usually employed only adults.

44. Mr. HAMMARBERG said that the question of child labour was a difficult one. It was not an intention of the Convention or the ILO conventions to prevent children supporting their families by doing domestic chores or helping with the harvest. But two clear aims were to ensure that all children received at least primary education and were not required to do physically or mentally hazardous work. In Egypt it was obviously not just a question of children doing seasonal work, for paragraph 308 stated that large numbers of Egyptian children entered the labour market at the age of six. The problem must be addressed in future policies, and it might be useful to discuss with ILO the possibility of conducting a survey of child labour as the first step in establishing policies for reform.

45. The CHAIRMAN invited the members of the Committee to make concluding general comments.

46. Mr. HAMMARBERG said that the discussion had been a full and frank one. He particularly commended the self-critical approach taken by the Egyptian delegation. Much progress had clearly been made in Egypt since its ratification of the Convention; one particularly important improvement was that the National Council was expanding the collection of statistics in order to establish the scope of the problems. Other welcome developments were the decisive action taken to bridge the gender gap in school enrolment and the mass information campaign on disability, with its emphasis on early detection.

47. The areas of his concern tended to be the same as those identified in the report. It was clear that rural children were generally disadvantaged, but urban children might be more at risk in some ways. The problem of disabled children should receive more attention in the future; school attendance by disabled children was shockingly low, and special schools were available only in Cairo. Greater efforts should be made to enable disabled children to attend normal schools. Part of the problem was clearly that disabled children were often "hidden" in their homes. That made the need for information campaigns about disability even more urgent. Indeed, there was a general need for more intensive dissemination of information about the Convention among children, decision-makers and the population at large. For example, there had not yet been a thorough discussion in Parliament of the meaning of the concept of the best interests of the child.

48. Mrs. SANTOS PAIS congratulated the Government of Egypt on being among the first to ratify the Convention and to submit a very comprehensive report to the Committee. It had demonstrated its commitment to using human rights as a framework for government policies. However, there appeared to be cause for concern in the area of the administration of justice for juveniles. More training for professionals was needed in that field and debate should be opened on the rights of the child. Minimum safeguards should be put into effect throughout the country to counter arbitrary action. Legislation should take account of the best interests of the child and reflect the principles of the Convention, particularly with regard to the dignity of the child. The reintegration of children into society and recognition of the constructive role they had to play should be promoted, and legislation should envisage alternatives to institutional care. Reintegration programmes should be tailored to each child and should not merely be punitive. The deprivation of

liberty should be a last resort, and if long terms in institutions were called for, they should be periodically reviewed. The right of the child to a fair trial, in particular, should be ensured.

49. Mrs. EUFEMIO said the discussion that had taken place with the delegation of Egypt had provided the Committee with a clearer insight into the report. Although it was encouraging to see that the Government had made progress in tackling social and economic problems, it should not be forgotten that, as Miss Mason had pointed out, poverty was not the only reason for the sexual exploitation and abuse of children. The deviant personality of the adult involved should also be taken into account. In the light of the relationship between powerful adults and vulnerable children, it would be useful to explore such factors in future research. Those providing services for children, such as teachers and doctors, should of course be qualified through education and training, but their personalities were important too. The monitoring mechanism which the Government of Egypt was working on should also monitor the personality and qualifications of staff in the light of the implementation of the Convention.

50. Miss MASON congratulated the Government of Egypt on its early ratification of the Convention and submission of its report. It was always encouraging to note adherence to family traditions and the belief that the family was the foundation of society; that was especially worthy of comment in the case of Egypt. However, there did appear to be some complacency in the Government's attitude towards sex, almost as if it was a taboo. The world had become a global village as a result of technological advances and children were therefore exposed to the deviance of other societies; in spite of strong traditions and beliefs it should not be thought that certain problems could not or would not happen in a particular country. The establishment of the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood was a positive step in fulfilling the Government's obligations to children.

51. Despite advances in health and education, there was room for further improvement, and in that context the reorganization of the national curriculum was to be welcomed. Mrs. Santos Pais' concern about children in conflict with the law was valid and had been well expressed. It was particularly worrying that children up to the age of 6, the most important period of life, were being subjected to custodial placements. Familial fostering would be better. The representatives of Egypt had stated that there was no discrimination in that country, but she hesitated to accept that. Attention should be paid to gender discrimination in all areas of life, with particular regard to discrimination against girls. Despite the progress made in education, there remained a disturbingly high rate of illiteracy. Finally, attention should be paid to rural areas, as they tended to be neglected.

52. Mr. KOLOSOV said that an encouraging dialogue had been started with the Government of Egypt and would undoubtedly continue over many years. The decision of the Supreme Constitutional Court applying the Convention to all laws passed should be welcomed. The delegation had provided comprehensive answers to questions, especially those relating to statistical indicators. However, there were some anomalies; for instance, in paragraph 15 of the

report, the percentage of the population under 15 was given, but the child had been defined as being under 18. There were therefore no figures for the percentage of children in the country.

53. It was to be hoped that the study on the possibility of Egypt acceding to ILO conventions and regulations would be completed successfully; that would be an important achievement, especially if children under the age of 15 were not employed to the extent they were at present. There was room for improvement in the situation of girls since it appeared that the rate of illiteracy among females was 14 per cent higher than the general rate. Although the Constitution guaranteed equal rights to education, real life was more complicated. It was good to see that there was a strong traditional legal framework surrounding the family, but that meant that children with no family might be disadvantaged. Finally, he fully shared the Committee's concern about children in conflict with the law and wondered whether it would be possible to review legislative provisions in the light of the Convention.

54. Mr. MOMBESHORA congratulated the delegation of Egypt on the useful explanations and information it had provided. In some areas, however, more details were needed in order to be able to assess progress accurately. Areas such as labour and justice needed looking into and it was to be hoped that the members of the delegation would do so when they returned to Egypt.

55. The CHAIRMAN expressed his gratitude to the Egyptian delegation for its competent participation in the Committee's deliberations. The Committee was not a court but a forum for dialogue. If its questioning had been insistent, that had been due to its concern for the children of Egypt. He expressed his confidence in the ability of the legal and social structures in Egypt to adhere to the Convention. The country's cultural and traditional values were to be respected, particularly in the light of the stress on the family as having primary responsibility for the child. If there was one request to be made, it was that the family should be made aware of the Convention so it could act as a channel guaranteeing the rights of the child.

56. Mr. NAGUIB (Egypt) thanked the Chairman and the Committee for the heart-warming discussion that had taken place. It had proved that mankind was moving in the right direction, acknowledging its responsibility for all the children of the world. The Committee's comments had been pertinent and had taught his delegation a great deal. It would return to Egypt with greater awareness and set about filling the gaps in the report.

57. He particularly admired the approach taken by Mr. Hammarberg, who did not stick to legal texts but tried to see things as they really were. However, he wished to explain why in Egypt such importance was attached to legal texts. Egypt had established itself as a modern State at the beginning of the nineteenth century and by 1883 had been prepared to adopt a series of French laws. There was always a gap between legal texts and reality, but once a law had been promulgated it paved the way for reality to catch up. It was therefore extremely important that the Convention should become part of Egyptian law. Mr. Kolosov had referred to the Shariah, but that was only one source of legal thinking in Egypt. The country's whole legal edifice was based on Latin and French jurisprudence, which was not always compatible with the Shariah. The Government of Egypt was not obliged to adopt every detail of

the Shariah, but merely derived certain principles from it. With reference to Miss Mason's comments, he observed that there was naturally a degree of discrimination which was partly due to problems of economic and social development; it should nevertheless be stressed that there was no legal or institutional discrimination.

58. In conclusion, he hoped that his country's next report would contain proof that its commitment to the Convention had resulted in progress in its implementation.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.